

# **Paul Cuffee School**

## **Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting**

**January 17, 2008**

**A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Paul Cuffee School was held on January 17, 2008 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Present: Luz Avila, Russell Carey, Elizabeth Colon, Shivohn Garcia, Philip Gould, Mary Sylvia Harrison, Barrett Hazeltine, Kay Lisle, Geanise Love, Keith Mathews, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Esq., John Patrick, Betsy Pollack Shimberg, Fraser Preston, Ana Cecilia Rosado, Babak Taleghani, Cade Tompkins.**

**Excused: Su Almeida, William Clifton, Sr., Joan Canady Countryman, Sandy Leclerc Robin Y. Miles.**

**Paul Cuffee Staff Present: David Bourns, Jonathan Conklin, Nina Giannotti, Paul Graseck, Julia Karahalidis, Nell Sears, Suzie Shaw.**

**Guests Present: David Burnham, students and parents from the seventh grade class of Ms. Garcia.**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. with a welcome by President Joop Nagtegaal and the introduction of new member of the board Kay Lisle. Joop also welcomed several guests, including**

**students and parents of Ms. Garcia's seventh grade class and Board President emeritus David Burnham. Mr. Burnham's distinguished and distinctive jacket was returned to him by Joop with appropriate ceremony and respect.**

**In his comments opening the meeting Joop referred to the recent gift of Eli Broad in the amount of \$23 million to seventeen charter schools in the Los Angeles area. He noted as well recent comments by an education official in Massachusetts indicating the view that charter schools had not as of yet lived up to their reputation for innovation. In this context of both positive and negative views of charter schools in the United States, Joop noted that such a climate can be a positive motivator for strategic investments in education with an increasing focus on accountability for such investments. With that in mind, Joop commented on the ongoing discussion in the school regarding merit pay and performance evaluation and the efforts underway with significant input and participation from the teachers to examine critically what we are doing and seek out opportunities to improve.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

**The minutes of November 15, 2007 were approved. The motion to approve was made by Keith Mathews and seconded by Babak Taleghani.**

**Teacher Presentation: The Harlem Renaissance and Thrill Rides**

**Mr. Bourns introduced seventh grade teacher Ms. Garcia. Ms. Garcia explained how her class had studied the Harlem Renaissance. Their work included each student selecting an individual mentor from that time period whom they then spent eight weeks researching. The research efforts of each student involved marking up the text of their research material, engaging the text actively, writing a biography and an analytical essay. In addition, members of the class developed a script to present their work through performance. Several members of the class presented a dramatic portrayal of historical figures from the Harlem Renaissance to the Board, and questions and answers followed. Ms. Garcia's students were applauded and thanked for their excellent academic work. Following the performance, Nell Sears showed slides of the middle school Thrill Rides and Harlem Renaissance projects.**

### **Head of School's January Report**

**David Bourns referred the Board to his written report and asked if there were any questions from the Board. Fraser Preston asked if the school had received feedback from the first class of graduates, now enrolled elsewhere in the ninth grade. Nell stated that there were frequent interactions and visits to the school from the members of the past graduating class and overall reports were favorable. Joop asked David Burnham at this time to update the board on the discussions regarding the Farmer's Market property. Mr. Burnham**

reported that meeting of the board of the property had taken place the previous night and that no action was taken but that a meeting of all shareholders in the property was scheduled for early March and some information might be forthcoming at that time.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Human Resources Committee**

Martha Newcomb delivered the report of the Human Resources Committee. She commented that the committee had reviewed a number of personnel policies. There was discussion regarding whether or not issues being discussed by this committee needed to come before the full Board for review or approval. There was agreement that the Board practice of how to handle matters from the Human Resources Committee should be reviewed and Joop and Martha would follow-up with regard to how to do so.

### **Finance Committee**

Babak Taleghani reviewed the written report of the Finance Committee. He reviewed the issue of reimbursement to the school for the actual enrolled number of students. He also commented on the committee's review of unbudgeted items, including a potential lockdown and alarm system and long-range planning issues such as enrollment increases and reimbursements by the state reflecting

**actual levels of enrollment.**

**On recommendation of the Finance Committee, Keith Mathews moved that \$19,655.56 be transferred from operating funds to the Capital portion of the Board Designated Reserve and that \$1,350 be transferred to the Wiggins portion of the Board Designated Reserve. Martha Newcomb seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.**

**There was discussion of the management letter from the external auditors and the findings regarding preference policy for school employees in admissions and certain bank account balances and FDIC insurance. The audited financial statements were then distributed in hard copy to all members of the Board of Directors in attendance at the meeting.**

## **Education Committee**

**Mary Sylvia Harrison gave the report of the Education Committee and noted that the minutes of the last meeting were distributed in advance. Keith asked about the issue of phasing the construction of middle and high school facilities. At this time, Joop asked Paul Graseck to present his preliminary findings and observations regarding planning for a high school. Paul's excellent and comprehensive report was received with enthusiasm and appreciation by the Board. Questions and discussion ensued regarding the concept of upper and lower houses in a high school, academic standards, advisory periods, discipline, community**

projects, and the importance and potential of service learning in the curriculum. Joop thanked Paul for his presentation and the hard work and thinking underlying it. Paul acknowledged and thanked the Paul Cuffee School colleagues who had and continued to contribute to his work.

### **Development Committee**

Cade Tompkins gave the report of the Development Committee. She noted that the Committee is examining its role and in particular the importance of overall institutional advancement. She reported that the annual fund stands at \$121,000 to date and she strongly encouraged 100% participation by members of the Board in the Annual Fund. An invitation to upcoming events was noted in the minutes of the Committee meeting.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

Due to the time, the report of the Strategic Planning Committee and the discussion of middle and high school phasing was deferred to the next meeting. Mr. Bourns commented briefly on the phasing discussions which have been held and the considerations which are explicated in the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee's most recent meeting.

Due to the time of the evening the discussion of proposed contract

**non-renewal and dismissal procedures was also deferred to the next meeting.**

## **New Business**

**No new business was brought before the Board.**

## **Adjournment**

**Ana Cecilia Rosada moved to adjourn. Babak Taleghani seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:35.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Russell C. Carey, Clerk**